

March 4, 2014 - Testimony of Karen Zaorski at the Program Review and Investigations (PRI) Committee public hearing in support of:
H.B. No. 5371, H.B. No. 5372, H.B. 5373, H.B. 5374

Good afternoon esteemed chairs, Mary Mushinsky, Joe Markley and members of the PRI Committee. I am Karen Zaorski from Wolcott. My son Raymond died of a cocaine overdose on 9/09/2010. I am here today representing the members and executive boards of Wolcott Crossroads, Inc. and CT Turning to Youth and Families. We'd like to congratulate the committee on its dedication to what are life and death issues for CT youth, young adults and families struggling with substance use disorder issues.

In 2012, I came before the PRI committee to encourage members to do whatever was necessary to effect policy change regarding the critical dilemmas associated with barriers to addiction treatment for this vulnerable population regardless of insurance coverage. It is clear that time, concern and hard work has been invested into researching solutions to the barriers of early intervention resources, access to age appropriate drug use disorders treatment, and recovery support programs.

You have gotten down to brass tacks and implemented some recommendations based on your committee's report and are about to roll out some of your plans in the form of H.B. 5371, H.B. 5372, H.B. 5373, and H.B. 5374 which we hope are all good starts to new and better solutions. Members of the organizations I represent have already attended a focus group initiated by DCF so we are well aware that thinking caps are in place for how best to ensure that the system cracks are narrowed in order to save lives. We desire a voice in more meeting rooms.

My main purpose in being here today is to thank you from the bottom of my heart, for listening and recognizing that there is an epidemic of drugs in this country, and that our young people and families are being impacted in the saddest ways imaginable. With your continued diligent work, we hope you will make it possible for more individuals and families in this state to timely secure appropriate help for their loved one when they need it most. If there is any information that our organizations can provide to assist in moving these bills forward, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Most sincerely,

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Representing: Wolcott Crossroads, Inc. and
CT Turning to Youth and Families